तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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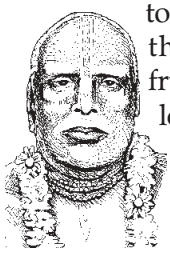
THE THOUGHTS OF LESSER MINDS

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode's
Tattva-viveka *1.27*

atra sthitasya jīvasya karma-jñānānuśīlanāt
viśvonnati-vidhānena kartavyam īśa-toṣaṇam

[Certain philosophers say that] the conditioned soul should seek to please God by performing pious works and acquiring knowledge for the benefit of the whole world.

Bhaktivinode's Commentary



The followers of this religion have no power to worship God selflessly. In general, their idea is that by cultivating fruitive work and speculative philosophy one should work to make improvements in the material world and thus please God. By building hospitals and schools and performing other philanthropic works, they try to do good to the world and thus please God. Worship of God by performing fruitive work (the process of *karma*) and by acquiring knowledge (the process of *jñāna*) is very important to them. They have no power to understand pure devotional service (the process of *śuddha-bhakti*), which is free of fruitive work and philosophical speculation.

next column ☞

Worship of God done out of a sense of duty is never natural or unselfish. "God has been kind to us, and therefore we should worship Him." These are the thoughts of lesser minds. Why is this not a good way to worship God? Because as a consequence one may easily develop the mentality that, "If God is not kind to me then I will not worship Him." One will have the impure, selfish desire to receive special favors from God in the future. If one desires only that God should kindly allow one to serve Him, that is fine. But the religion under discussion does not see things in that way. This religion sees God's kindness in terms of one's enjoyment of a happy life in this material world. ✿

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THE LIVING MRIDANGAS OF SRI CHAITANYA

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

The following is an excerpt from a lecture given by Srila Saraswati Thakur on the

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occasion of sending his first sannyāsī *preachers to the West.*

All persons of this world are superior to us in every way as far as this world is concerned. Such material matters are not commodities that are to be coveted by us. We are merely beggars carrying the triple staff of renunciation and devoted to the chanting of the words of Sri Chaitanya. We have no more, nor any higher desirable object than the pleasure of serving *śrī-hari-guru-vaiṣṇavas.*

We are not the operators of the instrument; we are only the instruments. We must always bear this in mind. The triple *bhikṣus, tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs,* are the living *mṛdaṅga* drums of Sri Chaitanya. We must constantly give forth our music at the lotus feet of Sri Guru. We should practice the function of the peripatetic preacher, *parivrājakācārya,* of carrying aloft the victorious banner of the commands of the divine Sri Gaurasundar by constant submission to Sri Guru and the *vaiṣṇavas*, fixing our eye on the pole-star of the heard transcendental voice. We must always bear in mind that we have been initiated in the vow of peripatetic preacher for the sole purpose of promulgating the heart's desire of Sri Guru and Gauranga. If we are constantly inspired with the duty of discoursing about the truth under the guidance of Sri Guru, then no hankering after traveling, nor any veiled form of desire other than the chanting of *hari-nāma* will ever strike any terror in our hearts. ❀

— Lecture given in Madras, 18 March 1933. From *Shri Chaitanya's Teachings,* pages 383-384. Sree Gaudiya Math. Madras. 1989.

If the Fan is Still Moving

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Devotee 1: Sometimes devotees think that when Lord Kapila teaches in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* that there is devotional service in ignorance, in passion, and in goodness, that it may also mean your own disciples. But then some other devotees say "No, we're above that designation. It's not mixed devotional service, even though we're neophytes."

Prabhupada: If you voluntarily do not follow, then you fall down. That is in ignorance.

Devotee 2: So in the third canto, part four, where it is described about devotional service in ignorance, passion, goodness, and so forth, that has nothing to do with your disciples then?

Prabhupada: Who is my disciple? First of all, let him strictly follow the disciplined rules.

Devotee 2: As long as one is following, then he is...

Prabhupada: Then he is all right.

Devotee 2: He is above those lower levels?

Prabhupada: Oh, yes. Otherwise, why is there a need of regulative principles? He is immediately liberated. If he thinks that, "Because I have taken to [Krishna consciousness], I am liberated," then why the rules and regulations?

Devotee 2: But as long as he follows the rules and regulations. He comes to the *brahma-bhūta* platform, *brahma-bhutaḥ prasannātmā*, immediately?

Prabhupada: Yes. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *māṁ ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate* — if one performs unalloyed devotional service then he is liberated [Bg. 14.26]. If his service is not *avyabhicāreṇa,* but *vyabhicāreṇa* — sometimes he falls down — then it is within *sattva-guṇa, rajo-guṇa, tamo-guṇa*. Krishna says, *māṁ ca yaḥ avyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena* — pure *bhakti*.

Devotee 2: Fall-down means deviation from the orders of the spiritual master.

Prabhupada: Yes, that is *vyabhicāreṇa*, that is not *avyabhicāreṇa*. If you are subjected to the attraction of *māyā*, that is *vyabhicāreṇa*.

Devotee 2: If somebody is following the instructions, but there's attraction for *māyā*...

Prabhupada: That cannot be. Maybe in the beginning due to past habits, but that must be nil very soon. Otherwise, he is not following. Just like a fan switched off may move for a little while, but it will not go on moving. If the switch is off, it must stop. And if it is still moving then it means that the switch is not off yet. ❀

— Morning walk conversation, 13 June 1976, Detroit.

By Mere Contact with Tulasi Devi

Adapted from
***Śrī Hari Bhakti-sudhodaya* 18.27-58**

dāru kiṁ na calaty aṅgaṁ kiṁ na svas iti bhastrikā
kiṁ svid vīṇā na vadati sajīvatvaṁ na tāvatā

bālo bhāgavataḥ śreṣṭhā vṛthoccaiś cirajīvy api
netaro 'bhyeti tulasīṁ sumahān api vṛkṣakaḥ

parijātasrajaṁ hitvā yāṁ vibhaktir mudā hariḥ
viṣṇu-priyā sā tulasī kathaṁ vārutsu gaṇyate

Does a tree not grow? Do the bellows of a blacksmith not breath? Does a vina not make melodious music? Should we consider them to be living beings? A child enriched with steadfast devotion to Sri Hari is most glorious, whereas a man of ripe age devoid of devotion to Sri Hari has wasted his life. Judge — can a mighty tree stand in comparison of virtue before a small *tulasī* plant? Lord Hari has no particular attraction to wearing a beautiful garland of Parijata flowers, the best celestial flower. But he is always delighted by *tulasī*. *Tulasī* is so glorious that no tree or plant can be compared with her. — Texts 27 to 29

I shall now narrate an ancient history about the sacred *tulasī* plant. Long ago there was an illiterate *brāhmaṇa* who lived as a low-class farmer and never performed any religious activities. A stout and hardy man, leaving his house with a rope in his hand he once went to the forest to collect grass to sell. He collected a large quantity, but desiring to get more green grass he began searching through the forest. He came upon a beautiful grove full of *tulasī*. It was dazzling like a green gem. The very sight brought purification and delight to his mind. He began to think, "If these plants are useful as food for the cows as well as man, then I shall collect a large quantity. Today, for a test, I shall take with me a small quantity and try selling it to my neighbors.

Just then, the span of his life came to its end. Unseen by him, the *yamadūtas*, the messengers of the lord of death, approached him. They commanded a deadly cobra, "By your poisonous bite, you now go and bring death to this person. He is a *brāhmaṇa* by birth but has not performed his *brahminical* rites, therefore be should suffer such an inauspicious death. You should quickly bite him before he touches the sacred *tulasī*. If death comes to him when he is in touch with *tulasī*, then he will certainly go beyond our reach."

Thus commanded, the cobra proceeded towards the *brāhmaṇa*, who did not see the snake. Fortune smiled on that *brāhmaṇa*, and before the snake got to him he picked a quantity of *tulasī*. Unseen to him, immediately Lord Vishnu's powerful *sudarśana-cakra* weapon appeared there. Now the *brāhmaṇa* was fully protected by *sudarśana*.

Unnoticed, the snake entered into the bundle of picked grass. The *brāhmaṇa* put the bundle on his head and began walking to the village. The *sudarśana-cakra* and the *yamadūtas* invisibly followed him, while the snake waited for an opportune moment to bite. The *yamadūtas* could feel the scorching heat coming from *sudarśana* and became frightened.

Meanwhile the *brāhmaṇa* arrived at the house of a pure devotee of Lord Vishnu. This devotee, by his pure devotion to the Lord was able to perceive the whole situation. Amazed to see the wonderful power of *tulasī*; with great curiosity that saintly *vaiṣṇava* inquired from the *yamadūtas* what had happened. The *yamadūtas* explained that the *sudarśana-cakra* had come to the protection of the sinful *brāhmaṇa* and that they were just waiting until he put the *tulasī* down — at that time the cobra would bite him and they would take him to the abode of Yamaraja.

Feeling compassion for the ignorant *brāhmaṇa*, that *viṣṇu-bhakta* said to the messengers of death, "O *yamadūtas*, please show mercy on this *brāhmaṇa*. You have said that as soon as he puts the *tulasī* down the snake will bite and kill him. But this *brāhmaṇa* has collected this sacred *tulasī* for me. Therefore, I request you, please spare his life."

The *yamadūtas* replied, "What can we do? We are only carrying out the orders of our master, Dharmaraja, the dispenser of justice. This *brāhmaṇa* only has two muhurtas (one-and-a-half hours) left to the span of his life, then he will be bitten by the cobra and die. Only Lord Hari can save him. If you offer *tulasī* to Lord Hari, He may be pleased to grant your prayer."

The *yamadūtas* said:

nityaṁ sannihito viṣṇuḥ saspṛhas tulasī-vane
api me patra-mātraikaṁ kaścid dhanyo 'rpayiṣyati

Thinking, 'Perhaps someone will simply offer Me a single *tulasī* leaf.' Lord Vishnu always stays in a *tulasī* forest. — Text 50

sukṛtī duṣkṛtī vāpī tulasyā yo 'rccayed dharim
tasyānte hi vayaṁ neśā viṣṇu-dūtaiḥ sa nīyate

Whether one is virtuous or sinful, if he worships Lord Vishnu with *tulasī* we cannot approach him. After his death he will be carried to Vaikuntha by the messengers of Lord Vishnu. — Text 52

kasmād iti na jānīmas tulasyā hi priyo hariḥ
gacchantaṁ tulasī hastaṁ rakṣann evānugacchati

yady eṣa sarvadā rakṣyas tvayā tarhi sakṛt kṛtā
dīyatāṁ tulasī-pūjā viprasyāyuḥ pravṛddhaye

Why Lord Narayana is so fond of *tulasī* is a mystery to us. Whoever carries *tulasī* in their hand is accompanied by protection personified. Therefore, if you desire to save the life of this *brāhmaṇa,* then without delay worship Sri Vishnu by offering *tulasī*. — Texts 53-54

Hearing the words of the *yamadūtas*, the devotee *brāhmaṇa* performed special worship to Vishnu by devoutly offering Him *tulasī*. Before the eyes of both of the *brāhmaṇas,* the cobra and the *yamadūtas* left that place. The *viṣṇu-bhakta brāhmaṇa* then explained everything to the other *brāhmaṇa*. Together, they went on pilgrimage and offered special worship to Lord Hari. By dint of their devotion to Lord Hari, at the end of their lives the two *brāhmaṇa*s went back to Godhead.

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Gaura Nitai's Boat

This medieval song was written by a Gauḍīyā Vaiṣṇava who identified himself only as Krishna Das.

(Dhānaśī-rāga)

nadīyāra ghāṭe bhāi ki adbhuta tarī
nitāi galuiyā tāte caitanya kāṇḍārī

O brothers! At the Nadiya ghat is a wonderful ferryboat. At the bow stands Lord Nitai, and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the captain.

dui raghunātha śrī-jīva gopāla śrī-rūpa sanātana
pārera naukāya erā dāṇḍi chaya jana

The six oarsmen in that boat are Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatan, Sri Jiva, Sri Gopal, and the two Raghunathas.

ke jābi bhāi bhava-pāre bali nitāi ḍāke
kheyāra kaḍi vinā pāra kare jāke tāke

Lord Nitai loudly calls, "O My brothers! Who amongst you will cross the ocean of birth and death? Without paying even a single paisa, one and all may cross to the other shore."

ātare kātara vinā ke pāra kare bhāi
kintu pāra kare sabhe caitanya nitāi

Brothers, if you won't take the trouble to pay the fare, who will take you across? But Chaitanya and Nitai are so magnanimous that They take everyone across the material ocean.

kṛṣṇa-dāsa bale bhāi bala hari hari
nitāi caitanyera ghāṭe nāhi lāge kaḍi

Krishna Das says, "O my brothers, please chant, 'Hari! Hari!'" At the ghat of Chaitanya and Nitai, no payment is required.

— *Gaura-pada-taraṅgiṇī*, edited by Mrinalakanti Ghosh, page 23. Sri Gauranga Press. Calcutta. 1903.

Obeisances to Tulasi Devi

Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 9.104

yā dṛṣṭā nikhilāgha-saṅgha-śamanī spṛṣṭā vapuḥ-pāvanī
rogāṇām abhivanditā nirasinī siktāntaka-trāsinī
pratyāsatti-vidhāyinī bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇasya samropitā
nyastā tac-caraṇe vimukti-phaladā tasyai tulasyai namaḥ

[Quoting the *Avantī-khaṇḍa:*] I offer my respectful obeisances to *tulasī-devī*. When someone sees her, she destroys all his sins. When someone touches her, she purifies his body. When someone offers obeisances to her, she cures his diseases. When someone waters her, she makes Yamaraja afraid of him. When someone plants her, she brings him near to Lord Krishna. When someone places her at Lord Krishna's feet, she gives him liberation.

— Translated by Sri Kusakratha Das. Krishna Library. Culver City, California. 1992.

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